

#### THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED:

**REPORT NO: 11-146** 

ATTENTION:

Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee,

Agenda of November 2, 2011

SUBJECT:

Red Light Photo Enforcement Program - Status Report

COUNCIL

DISTRICTS:

All

REFERENCE:

City Council Report Nos. 96-08, 96-136, 98-114, 02-203, 02-282,

04-056, 06-093, 07-183, 08-008

### REQUESTED ACTION:

This is an information item only. No action is required on the part of the Committee or the City Council.

#### **SUMMARY:**

During the fiscal year 2012 (FY12) budget presentation, the Office of the Independent Budget Analyst (IBA) requested a status report regarding the City's Red Light Photo Enforcement Program (RLPE). This report provides the information requested by the IBA and covers both the safety enhancement and revenue generation aspects of the program.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

On average, there are more than 10,000 vehicle collisions reported each year within the City of San Diego. According to studies by the Federal Highway Administration, running red lights is the most frequent cause of traffic collisions in metropolitan areas. Red Light Photo Enforcement Programs (RLPE) have been proven to be an effective tool in accident prevention and traffic violation reduction. The RLPE program employs technology that records traffic violations the moment they occur. Cameras are used to photograph only those vehicles that run red lights in targeted areas. Police Officers review the film for legitimacy and issue a traffic citation. The vendor then mails the citation to the vehicles' registered owner.

By the end of 2009, Red Light Photo Enforcement cameras were installed and operational at fifteen signalized locations throughout the City (locations identified in attachment 1). The locations were selected based on collision history; collision type; traffic violation history; volume of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists; speed of motorists; and input from the community.

The purpose of the Red Light Photo Enforcement Program in San Diego is to prevent red light violations and reduce collisions by modifying driver behavior. To date, the Police Department has been issuing approximately 15,000 citations per year at the fifteen locations where red light cameras are installed.

Data analysis indicates that the number of collisions attributable to running red lights has declined since the cameras were installed. In fiscal year 2011 (FY11), reported accidents related to running red lights decreased approximately 50 percent and rear end collisions decreased by 11 percent when compared to reported collisions prior to RLPE installation. The total number of accidents recorded at the 15 locations decreased by 35 percent overall. The program has also proven successful in raising public awareness of the severity of running red lights. Continuing news coverage, community discussion and inquiries from decision makers support this finding.

#### **PROGRAM COSTS:**

City staff continues to collect and monitor cost data for the program and considers this information as part of its decision to exercise contract options. With all 15 of the proposed RLPE locations now operating, the City is receiving revenue in excess of program costs.

American Traffic Solutions, Inc is the City's vendor for the RLPE program. The existing contract is for three years with a two year option for renewal. February 1, 2012 will begin the fifth and final year of the current contract. The vendor is paid a flat monthly fee of \$3,750 for each of the first twelve locations and \$5,195 for each additional location. This totals \$60,585/month or \$727,020/year for the vendor.

Both the costs of the program and the revenues received from citations have varied throughout the life of the program. Not all the cameras were installed at the same time nor were all the cameras and detectors activated at each location at the same time. For instance, left turn and right turn detectors came later at some locations than others, therefore, violations would not have been recorded and revenues would not have been received for those movements.

From the beginning of FY11, the cameras, including all detectors at each of the fifteen locations, were fully activated for each assigned movement. The revenue received for FY11 was \$1,946,977 and the cost of the program, including staff time and the vendor cost, was \$1,734,020, providing net revenue of \$212,957 to the City. It is anticipated that the revenues from the program will continue to meet or exceed the costs although they will steadily decline as motorists

become aware of the enforcement effort and change their driving behaviors to avoid citations. Because this is the last year of the current contract, the overall program will be reevaluated next year and a recommendation as to whether this program should be continued will be made at that time. An evaluation of each RLPE intersection will be made to determine which intersections should be deleted and potentially new locations may be added if the program continues.

### **FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

None with this action. This report identifies the cost of the program and the revenues generated from the red light photo citations in fiscal year 2011.

## PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

On December 4, 2007, City Council approved the selection of American Traffic Solutions, Inc. as the vendor for the Red Light Photo Enforcement Program and approved a new contract for three years plus two option years to renew. On February 6 2008, staff presented to the Public Safety & Neighborhood Services Committee the sites where the cameras would be installed. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

None with this action.

Garth K. Sturdevan

Interim Director,

Transportation and Storm Water Department

Originating Department

Jay M. Goldstone

Chief Operating Officer

## Red Light Photo Locations

October 2011

A St / 10th Ave
Garnet Ave / Mission Bay Dr.
Grape St. / N. Harbor Dr.
Aero Dr. / Murphy Canyon Rd.
Del Mar Hts Rd / El Camino Real
Mira Mesa Bl / Scranton Rd
Cam Del Rio N / Mission Ctr Rd
10th Ave / F St
Clairmont Mesa Bl / Convoy St
Balboa Ave / Kearny Villa Rd
Cam Del Rio N / Qualcomm Wy
Cleveland Av / Washington St
Mira Mesa Bl / Westview Pky
Nimitz Bl / Rosecrans St
Genesee Av / N. Torrey Pines Rd

Attachment 1